

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

Somalia: 18 Killed by Terrorists, Union Leader Escapes

Brussels, 30 March 2015 (ITUC OnLine): Eighteen people, including 12 hotel workers and Somalia's Ambassador to the UN in Geneva, were killed in Friday's terrorist attack in Mogadishu, with at least 28 more injured. Omar Faruk Osman, General Secretary of national trade union centre FESTU, escaped the attack by the Al Shabaab terror group by jumping from a first-floor hotel window. Six attackers were also killed by security forces.

Osman described the attack as follows: "The Al-shabaab terrorists first detonated a Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Device (VBIED) at the main gate of the hotel before six heavily armed fighters fought their way into the hotel. One of them suicided at the ground floor, killing those who were having afternoon tea/coffee there as well as security guards. The other five stormed into the first, second and third floors of the hotel where rooms are located and killed some people and held several people hostage overnight until they and their hostages died during an operation at the next day at around 7:30 a.m.

"At the time of the attack, I was having a meeting with four friends at this hotel, discussing our preparations for Labour Day commemorations. I had to run from the restaurant and get to first floor before they reached and jumped from the first floor, and hide inside next house until counter-terrorism forces arrived for 35 minutes who took control of the house where I was hiding and let me go after identifying myself. My friends were also rescued as they pretended like dead people when terrorists entered the restaurant."

Ambassador Yusuf Bari Bari was wounded during the attack and subsequently died in hospital. He had been a strong supporter of Somalia adopting ILO Conventions 87 and 98 on Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining against opposition from some within government circles.

FESTU is planning a commemoration ceremony for the victims on Labour Day in Somalia, the 1st of May.

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